



## NEWS RELEASE

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## **With Sharp Drop in Demand, Community-Based COVID-19 Testing Sites to End Operations March 31**

*Availability of free at-home tests and extensive network of SHIELD saliva test sites around the State eliminates need for the state-run sites that have conducted 1.5 million tests since sites were launched in 2020*

**SPRINGFIELD** – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced today that in response to a sharp drop in the demand for COVID-19 testing services at the ten [Community-Based Testing Sites](#) and the anticipated end of federal funding, operations at the locations will end on March 31. IDPH previewed that operations would be winding down when the mask mandate was lifted and has seen traffic at the sites – which carried out more than 1.5 million tests in total throughout their operation – drop precipitously in recent weeks. The sites are currently handling less than one percent of the tests being conducted statewide.

The number of daily tests conducted at these sites is on track to be the lowest on record with each site seeing fewer than 50 individuals per day, according to IDPH data. Given the availability of free at-home COVID-19 tests from the federal government, the statewide network of federally qualified health centers and the extensive number of [SHIELD saliva testing sites](#) throughout Illinois, there are ample, convenient opportunities for Illinois residents to obtain access to a test if needed.

The State is currently strongly positioned to respond to a potential surge, with the State stockpile of tests nearly fully replenished. There are more than 1.5 million rapid tests on hand, with a half a million more on the way in the coming weeks. The State has also instructed hospitals, schools, and local health departments to consider their current testing capacity and take all preparations necessary. The State is also in communication with pharmacies and healthcare providers about increasing their inventory of the various FDA-approved oral BA.2 treatments in case of another surge.

IDPH established the drive-thru Community-Based Testing Sites in April, 2020 when there were far fewer options for residents to get tested. The ten locations will stop operations as of their respective closing times on March 31. Both testing and vaccinations have been offered at sites in Aurora, Arlington Heights, South Holland, Fairview Heights and Peoria. Only testing is offered at Bloomington, Champaign, Harwood Heights, Rockford and Waukegan.

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Demand for tests at the Community-Based sites reached a peak of more 1,040 tests per day at each site in November 2020.

The five sites that also provide vaccinations will close operations as well, having administered almost 8,800 doses. This is in addition to more than 243,000 vaccinations provide through almost 8,000 mobile vaccination clinics.

Over the last year, the state's testing and vaccination infrastructure at pharmacies, health clinics and other locations has increased substantially, thus providing capacity to ramp up capabilities if it becomes necessary.

To order free at-home COVID-19 tests from the federal government, go to <https://www.covidtests.gov>.

Additional information and COVID-19 data can be found at: <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19.html>

Vaccination is the key to ending this pandemic. To find a COVID-19 vaccination location near you, go to [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov).

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